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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
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INFO RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
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SUBJECT: BASRAH GOVERNOR REACHES OUT

REF: (A) BASRAH 110 (B) BASRAH 93

CLASSIFIED BY: Louis L. Bono, Director, Basrah Regional Embassy
Office, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Provincial Council (PC) member Sayed Ghali visited the Regional Embassy Office on November 20 to discuss the appeal against Governor Mohammed Wa'eli. (Ref. A) Ghali is chairman of the Reconstruction Committee and is the Basrah leader of the Iraqi National Accord.

¶2. (S) Ghali confirmed that PC Chairman Mohammed Obadi (Dawa) had filed an appeal of the administrative court decision in favor of Wa'eli. He said that Obadi was directed to file the appeal by the Prime Minister, who is under pressure from the United Iraqi Alliance and Iran. On the merits of the case, Ghali noted that the no confidence vote was legally invalid, as the vote was not taken in session (members signed a petition) and did not constitute a full two-thirds majority. (Note: Gali also admitted that he was one of the PC members who voted against Wa'eli, which we suspect was done under duress. End note.) Ghali believes the appeal could take two or three months, and the instability in the governorate could adversely impact PIC. Ghali said that now it was important to recognize Wa'eli as the governor and move on. He said that since the administrative court's decision (ref. B), Wa'eli has been reconciliatory, constructive and cooperative with the PC and that Wa'eli is responsibly discharging his duties. Ghali stressed the reality that for now, Wa'eli was the best of all possibilities for governor.

¶3. (C) In a subsequent telephone conversation, Badr leader Hasan al-Rashid acknowledged that the Basrah Islamic List (BIL) had a hand in the appeal. He acknowledged that the governor has made overtures towards the PC and BIL and said as long as the dialogue continues, there is no need to worry about the appeal.

¶4. (S) Comment: The no confidence vote may have spurred Wa'eli into becoming more cooperative. It appears that despite the appeal, the governor and PC have settled into a working relationship. As Ghali said to us, "our problem is the sectarian central government." It seems to us that most of the leaders in Basrah, from Generals Mohan and Jalil to political rival Hasan al-Rashid, have accepted a workable provincial government with Wa'eli, and it is PM Maliki who is refusing to accede to this political resolution in Basrah. We must encourage the GoI to close this chapter and focus on the next task, transition to Iraqi control.

